

1-1-2012

# A Multi-Dimensional Pedagogy for Racial Justice in Writing Centers

Rasha Diab

*University of Texas at Austin*

Beth Godbee

*Marquette University, [beth.godbee@marquette.edu](mailto:beth.godbee@marquette.edu)*

Thomas Ferrel

*University of Missouri - Kansas City*

Neil Simpkins

*University of Wisconsin - Madison*

## A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PEDAGOGY FOR RACIAL JUSTICE IN WRITING CENTERS

Rasha Diab  
The University of Texas at Austin  
rashadiab@austin.utexas.edu

Beth Godbee  
Marquette University  
bethgodbee@gmail.com

Thomas Ferrel  
University of Missouri-Kansas City  
ferrelt@umck.edu

Neil Simpkins  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
nsimpkins@wisc.edu

This article has its origins in relationship: in a group of writing teachers/tutors all similarly committed to racial justice talking with each other about how those commitments become manifest and are made actionable in our everyday lives. Our conversations have informed, grown out of, and occurred alongside the ongoing work of the IWCA (International Writing Centers Association) and MWCA (Midwest Writing Centers Association) Special Interest Groups on Antiracism Activism. Victor Villanueva's 2005 keynote address and subsequent publication in *The Writing Center Journal* have catalyzed the work of the SIGs as well as revived *in writing centers* calls for students' linguistic and cultural rights—calls stretching back to the 1950's debates that led to the CCC's crucial resolution "Students' Right to Their Own Language" in 1974 and no fewer than thirty resolutions on diversity passed by the NCTE since 1970.<sup>1</sup> Since Villanueva's 2005 address, we have seen frequent discussions on writing center listservs; a number of conference presentations, articles, and chapters on anti-racism in writing centers (e.g., Condon; Dees, Godbee, and Ozias; Geller, et al.); and recent book-length manuscripts, including Harry C. Denny's *Facing the Center* (2010), Laura Greenfield and Karen Rowan's edited collection *Writing Centers and the New Racism* (2011), and Frankie Condon's *I Hope I Join the Band* (2012). We reference this history and the growing literature in writing centers to illustrate that this article and our own attempts at pedagogical intervention occur within a much longer and larger disciplinary conversation in the field of composition and rhetoric. Together, the aforementioned resolutions and scholarship on students' linguistic and cultural rights not only counter overt racism and related language discrimination, but also begin the hard work of addressing implicit, institutionalized, and (inter)nationalized racism, which are often more difficult to identify and intervene into.

In light of these disciplinary conversations and increased attention to anti-racism in writing centers, we see a disciplinary mandate for writing centers to better articulate a *pedagogy for racial justice* that informs our everyday work, including, but not limited to, tutoring practice. This mandate, we believe, responds to questions, such as: How do we make actionable our commitment to racial justice when working with writers one-with-one? What interactional stances and pedagogical moves enact a pedagogy of anti-racism in writing centers? How do we prepare ourselves to enact this pedagogy? Our answers to these questions center around (1) articulating and frequently re-articulating our commitments to racial and social justice and (2) making these commitments actionable through both reflective self-work and action-oriented work-with-others, as we have written in the forthcoming article "Making Commitments to Racial Justice Actionable." In preparing this piece and toward answering these questions, we have talked through conference calls and written long dialogic letters—narrating our commitments and racialized positions in the world, discussing our approaches to tutoring and writing center/program administration, and reading a range of scholarly literature we have recommended to each other. This work leads us to argue that a pedagogy of anti-racism must be more than a statement that we abhor racial injustice. Rather, this pedagogy must be *multi-dimensional* and include a positive and actionable articulation of the "ought to be" that we are aiming toward.

Among the many dimensions that make up a pedagogy for racial justice, we discuss here three crucial ones. First, this pedagogy is not a one-time deal, but is ongoing, and, as such, *processual and reiterative*. Just as we in writing centers are likely to say (without much disagreement) that learning and writing are lifelong processes, so do we see that processes for equity and justice occur through ongoing commitment,

consistent learning, and institutional change both in the here-and-now and sustained over time. Second, rather than a one-size-fits-all set of strategies to be applied in any situation, this pedagogy is *reflective* and *attentive*—meaning that, as tutors and administrators, we are observant throughout our interactions with others and adaptable to the ways in which power and privilege manifest in given moments. Third, because the work is sustained over time in deeply reflective and attentive ways, a pedagogy for racial justice recognizes the full personhood of all those involved: teacher and student, tutor and writer. As such, this pedagogy is *embodied and engaged*—affective, tangible, and holistic.

Together, these proposed dimensions respond to a question we are often asked: “So, what do we do in a session of thirty minutes or so?” In contrast to defining writing center work as a time-bound conference, we find that generative writing center work happens *before*, *during*, and *beyond* any timed unit of analysis and production (thirty minutes or otherwise). Specifically, we value the work *before* conferences as we study and construct our pedagogy and *beyond* as we reflect on our *praxis*; revise our pedagogy; and extend relationships begun in a session, classroom, or break room. Yet, this question is consequential, for it makes us strive to develop a handy toolkit, a short-list of “guaranteed good” strategies that maximize learning/teaching/tutoring in a bounded unit of time. This assumption, as Anne Ellen Geller has written, burdens us, making the clock central to writing center work. Geller reminds us to “embrace the notion that conferences are defined by much more than the time it takes to hold them” (22). This “much more,” we believe, involves self-work, work-with-other, and work-within-institutions. Thinking on all three layers highlights the need for more than creating better texts that take into consideration imagined readers, but that also exist apart from the writer’s and the tutor’s identity, ideology, and institutional influence (i.e., one’s role in maintaining, perpetuating, and disrupting socially constructed systems of oppression and marginalization).

Concomitantly, the aforementioned three dimensions *model* ways to intervene and *shift* attention away from a toolkit teaching model to a contextually rich, rhetorically savvy, relationally connective, and commitment-driven model that *cannot* be reduced to a list of strategies or techniques. As such, we advocate a pedagogy for racial justice with at least three dimensions: (1) *processual and reiterative*, (2) *reflective and attentive*, and (3) *embodied and engaged*. Identifying these

as dimensions helps us articulate the values and assumptions underlying our interactions in writing centers. We believe these articulations are especially important, for, as Nancy Grimm explains, “If we want to avoid complicity with racism and other forms of exclusion, then those tacit theories about language, literacy, and learning need to be made explicit and open to revision” (78). We invite you to consider these dimensions along with us and to work toward articulating other dimensions of a more racially just pedagogy.

### Processual and Reiterative Pedagogy

As a first dimension of a pedagogy for racial justice, the qualities of *processual* and *reiterative* signal a long-term investment in and ongoing commitment to racial justice. We highlight the processual nature of this work because we believe that when teaching writing aims toward racial justice, it is not and cannot be reduced to something that happens in just one moment. A pedagogy for racial justice can neither be a fiat, professed at a discrete moment, nor can it be assumed to exist by a well-intentioned force that we inherit because of the work of some. Rather, doing the work of anti-racism should be seen as everyday and ongoing, for we seek to do no less than contend with the history and seamless contradictions of the legacies of race/ism that (1) profess equity, while falling short of acting on it; (2) call for transformation, while asking us to keep our ways and stand still; (3) ask for expansion of access and resources, while hiding the mechanisms by which membership is extended and by which networks insulate some of us from others; and (4) claim protection against racism, while failing to engage its systemic and institutional dimensions. A pedagogy for racial justice not only provides us with a critique *against* and framework for responding to these conditions; it also provides us with a critique *for* and the means for imagining the ends toward which we are aiming. As such, uptake of anti-racism needs to be actionable and renewable—in other words, processual and reiterative.

To illustrate, we have read narrative accounts both in writing center literature and in our local writing centers that essentially reduce the work of anti-racism to encounters in which a student’s writing makes a racist argument and the tutor is positioned to respond. Too often these accounts reduce racism to individual bias, and too often these reduce our pedagogy to the means of correction (hence, leading to concerns that anti-racism advocates just political correctness). Although not always successful, we—try to use such

moments for reflecting on beliefs and actions within a much larger exploration of the morphing nature of racism and its interconnectedness with other manifestations of oppression. Our recognition of a larger context needs to leave us with nuanced understandings of both the historical legacies and current systems of power and privilege. Consider the following moment, a re-constructed scenario,<sup>2</sup> which invites ongoing consideration and conversation with colleagues:

A faculty member with a joint appointment in history and ethnic studies emails the writing center to request a class visit. In the email, she explains, “This course will have a mix of history majors and ethnic studies people, so that is why I think some extra attention to writing is important. Also, I hope the class visit will help the ethnic studies students (many of whom are non-traditional students) get acquainted with the writing center right away.” The tutor responds by scheduling the class visit, but doesn’t address the range of implicit assumptions about who most benefits from and is served by the writing center and who are likely to be “struggling” writers in the class.

Difficult discussions, of course, take time and are easily sidestepped. Yet, if we value the processual and reiterative nature of a pedagogy for racial justice, then we step *into* instead of *away from* difficulty. The scenario prompts us, for example, to understand outreach differently. It prompts us to talk with the faculty member about our understanding of the writing center’s value to all writers and perhaps even to address directly assumptions of “ethnic studies people” as opposed to “history majors”—categories that are racially marked and associated here with perceived writing ability and linguistic knowledge. As we consider multiple interventions, we consider the ways power operates for the multiple players, and we become co-learners who occupy multi-dimensional roles in the process.

Using the scenario above, we make the choice to re-read, re-imagine, and re-enact narratives. We learn to see discrete moments within larger patterns and to take courageous actions—perhaps here reaching out to the faculty member, if not rethinking our class visits or building solidarity with the ethnic studies program or reshaping our WAC curriculum to value linguistic diversity. We learn to see these actions (and occasions that call for action) *not* as isolated events, but as multiple *iterations* in an ongoing and always-striving process against racism and toward racial justice. With this example, if our goal were to resist easy narratives

about writers as a “liability” with “deficits” to be “fixed” by the writing center, then the assumptions that inform the professor’s urgent request would neither meet our goal nor serve the students’ needs for increasing awareness of how to negotiate linguistic and communicative practices. Further, re-reading and re-writing this scenario invites the self-work of building disciplinary knowledge—knowledge that provides us with counter-narrative to address such an outreach request.

Specifically, we need to know disciplinary positions on linguistic, cultural, and human rights. The pedagogical work we do in writing centers is at its best, we believe, when informed by research in language and linguistics. Geneva Smitherman, Suresh Canagarajah, Bruce Horner, Min-Zhan Lu, and Paul Matsuda, among others, have shed light on how language policies and perceptions of the racialized Other disguise and hide racial attitudes and prejudice. For example, many representations of multilingual writers limit our perceptions of the students and the instructional models available to us. Just as students of color in the United States are frequently perceived of as in need of changing (i.e., “whitewashing language”), so too are international and multilingual writers commonly perceived as needing revision and remediation. Rather, as Canagarajah explains, we should resist assumptions of deficiency and embrace a critical, reflective use of hybrid linguistic resources. This post-structuralist linguistic approach, says Canagarajah, “adopts a critical orientation to language that assumes nothing instrumental or value-free about norms.” Aware that norms “favor some groups over others,” we need instead to adopt the generative “hybridity of language.” This hybridity not only makes us attentive to new communicative possibilities, but also detaches us from thinking of linguistic transfer as, essentially, a liability. We are then re-positioned to value and make use of writers’ varied linguistic resources. This repositioning reframes both the context and terms of communication. And, as Vershawn Ashanti Young contends in “Should Writers Use Their Own English?”, such openness to and encouragement of linguistic diversity works toward abating prejudice and dismantling systemic racism.

Because writing centers are literacy and language sites (a fact highlighted in the move toward multiliteracy centers, which the past special issue of this journal addressed), a pedagogy for racial justice in writing centers operates through all aspects of our work, especially in the ways we respond to and work with writers in using linguistic and communicative

resources. To call for transformation is to call for a transformed understanding of language, composition, and communication—the heart of what we do. As such, this pedagogical work is processual and reiterative: it remains ongoing, as we keep learning and keep striving both in a critique *against* racism—and resultant linguistic and cultural injustice—and critique *for* equity and racial justice.

### Reflective and Attentive Pedagogy

Every conversation we have among staff or in writing conferences, no matter the topic, has implications for the way that racism works in our lives. And across these conversations, there is a need to lean in, listen carefully, observe, and respond in reflective and attentive ways. Ongoing reflection and attentiveness defy the logic of a one-size-fits-all approach that is often embodied in the notion, for example, of developing portable tutoring strategies that remain static across interactions. Rather, a reflective and attentive pedagogy leads us to a flexible and adaptable approach. Such an approach recognizes the multiple identities of tutors, writers, and outside others (e.g., faculty members, prospective employers, and other audience members) as well as the complex social dynamics at play in any conversation around writing, which is part of the third dimension we discuss in the next section.

Reflection and attentiveness are especially important when working in cross-racial collaborations in which racism can manifest in seemingly contradictory ways at one and the same time—being both implicit and explicit, institutional and individual, Other-oriented and internalized, local and (inter)national. As an example:

We remember a session in which the writer had written a paper about the film *The Piano* and described the Maoris as primitive and uneducated. The writer was a South Asian, American, first-year, female student, and the tutor an older white American undergraduate man. The tutor talked with her about why describing the Maori as primitive was problematic, and the writer immediately became visibly nervous and less engaged in the session, ultimately deleting the description of “primitive” without changing the substance of the argument.

How did the tutor’s white, male, American, and more academically senior identity complicate receptiveness? How did asymmetrical power play a role not only in the interactional dynamics (e.g., who has the floor to speak), but also in the sense of who is “right” within

the session (e.g., who has the most accurate reading of the text)? And how does our ongoing education help to prepare tutors to intervene into similar situations with different enactments of racism, including situations in which internalized and (inter)nationalized racism are central? We need to attend closely to the examples we<sup>3</sup> use because they can, on the one hand, flatten our understandings of racism and, on the other, help us see how responses differ based on who is positioned as the tutor, who as the writer, and who as audience members influencing a writing conference.

When discussing our experiences with tutoring, we kept coming back to this scenario because it helps us reflect on just how complicated anti-racism is. It is not only about the content (what is written) or the people involved (who is present) or the roles we play (how we perform tutoring), but it is also very much about understanding asymmetrical power and racial justice. If political correctness is our goal, then encouraging any writer to eliminate the word “primitive” meets that goal. But if our goal is something more—about embracing our full humanity, for instance—then explaining the uses of language would involve talk about how language recycles dehumanization and the essentialization of peoples and always has a national investment. In the scenario, we might reflect on the ways in which the writer understands her own identity and the rhetorical situation, as a woman of color writing to primarily white faculty members at her predominantly white U.S. university. It is not hard to imagine this situation happening with the same text being negotiated by a tutor of color and a white student or by writers, tutors, and faculty members with many different identities. In all cases, the situation would invite reflection on and attention to ways in which racism manifests as externalized, internalized, and/or (inter)national.

The more reflective and attentive we can be when tutoring writing, the more we can slow down the action, remember our commitments, and see challenging moments as moments both for teaching and for learning. In-the-moment conversations, then, may disrupt more typical agendas or agenda-setting, may require us to make efforts to follow up on a visit on different terms than we’re conditioned to, may ask us to engage in conversations with instructors and colleagues, and certainly may invite us to go beyond the 30- or 60-minute session as the *only* or *typical* structure of writing center work. Rather than just claiming protection against racism, we can see such moments as generative for learning (*with* and *alongside*

others) how to intervene into the many ways that racism manifests in our writing and interactions.

### Embodied and Engaged Pedagogy

Like the first two, this third dimension of a pedagogy for racial justice makes our commitments actionable in the here-and-now, in the everyday. *Embodied* and *engaged* pedagogy recognizes we are complex and capable beings in the way that Paulo Freire discusses being “fully human” in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and bell hooks advocates “full engagement” in *Teaching to Transgress*. What Freire and hooks affirm is our humanity, our existence as fully human. This humanity implies rights that are neither alienable, divisible, deferrable, or debatable even if we are mired in discourses that make them seem so. These are *rights to*, in the sense of a right *to* life, *to* education, *to* security, and *to* linguistic and cultural resources. Yet, the dehumanization and marginalization of the Other is typically recycled in the form of “benign” arguments that violate rights. In the following scenario, a writer makes an argument about bilingual education, rehashing arguments of assimilation that hurt all involved. Under different guises, the arguments deny the perceived Other of one’s own language, while also denying Oneself of the right of access to different communicative and cultural resources:

A white first-year student comes into the Multicultural Resource Center with a paper arguing that bilingual education should be outlawed in schools. He argues that bilingual education encourages Mexican immigrants not to learn English, and then they drop out of school and end up committing crimes. As he reads his paper aloud to a white tutor (who is the only writing center tutor at this location), other students walk in and out of the space, many of whom are bilingual Latino/a students. The tutor struggles with how to call the writer’s assumptions into question without getting so angry that the student feels attacked; she feels her heart rate rise at arguments she considers racist. After the session, she wants to debrief with someone, but she isn’t sure whom she can talk with.

Numerous identities are in play here, but in writing centers, we seldom talk about *all* the actual people involved or how racisms violate our rights, and perhaps this is because models of addressing racism in writing centers rarely talk about (human) rights. At the forefront of this scenario is the white student-writer, who is likely insulated from and prevented from developing relationships with people of color, as has

happened through the racialization of space and spacialization of race in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Through this insulation connected to systemic power and privilege, the writer is denied the right to learn about other linguistic and rhetorical traditions and recycles assimilationist educational policies. In doing so, the writer becomes complicit in denying others their rights, while assuming that he is “saving” them and the world. Alongside the writer are the tutor and her anger, an emotion that turns to a feeling of isolation as the session ends. Yet, there are also the bilingual Latino/a student-writers—the unintended witnesses of this interaction—moving in and out of the same space as well. Their presence is significant if we are to consider the implications of any conversation about writing and its tangible impact on the many people involved as direct participants, as possible recipients (i.e., audience members), and as observers, or people listening in.

When our tutoring methodologies/pedagogies are not attached to the reality of identities and systems, we author(ize) a pedagogy that de-prioritizes issues of human rights—including linguistic, cultural, and religious rights—rights that guarantee full realization of the humanity of each of us. Rather, by considering the people involved and the ways we are fully embodied and fully engaged in writing conferences, we can understand anti-racism as more than an intellectual activity. We can imagine, therefore, a tutor inviting the student to reflect on (1) the warrants that inform the argument; (2) the implications of the causal chain he constructs among immigration, English, school drop-out rates, and criminal activity; (3) the subsequent image of the Mexican immigrant his argument constructs; and (4) the impact—intended and unintended—on Latino/as in his class, in the writing center, and in other locations as well. Further, we might imagine ways the tutor could invite the writer into an ongoing discussion of language and education, signaling investment both in the writer and in the individuals he is charged to write about through the lens of policy. This engaged reflection on racial justice becomes affective and holistic, instead of being just a conceptual, intellectual regurgitation of what is racially appropriate. Being embodied and engaged brings attention to the physicality of our spaces and to the structure of conversational activity; it helps us understand teaching/tutoring within the discourse of human rights in relationship to people present and imagined. At the same time, it helps us understand that talk about writing is talk about all facets of our lives: it is not just about a paper’s structure or for the outcome of an improved course grade. Rather, to

clarify: within the framework of human rights, education is a right; racial justice is a right. Concomitantly, teaching for racial justice can neither remain solely a topic for discussion, nor be an ignored right. To develop a tutoring pedagogy focused on *rights*, we see all individuals within systems as embodied, and we see the moments that make up our work as calling for deep and sustained engagement.

Freire's principles of dialogue can help us move from a conceptual discussion of Othering practices, which are typically detached from our lives and lived experiences, to a dialogic learning space of action. When we think about attitudes we want to develop and exhibit in the writing center (and in life in general, really), Freire's dialogic model captures many of the values we identify as essential to being embodied and engaged: "Founding itself upon love, humility, and faith, dialogue becomes a horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers is the logical consequence" (91). The horizontal relationship, or flat hierarchy, that Freire proposes meshes well with writing center studies' aspiration for a one-with-one, peer-with-peer relationship between writer and tutor. This relationship is characterized by the affective qualities of love, humility, and faith (and finding and strengthening those within one's self) rather than a more altruistic or helping-others stance that Nancy Grimm has critiqued. As Freire writes, "love is a commitment to others" (89), and humility makes co-learning and power-sharing possible (90). However, the two—love and humility—work together from faith: "Dialogue further requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human (which is not the privilege of an elite, but the birthright of all)" (90). Love, humility, and faith endure as important emotions, attitudes, and actions (for they are not static states) for co-learning about racism and collaboratively acting for anti-racism. And dialogue, what underlies writing center work, is a central site for embodied, engaged pedagogy.

These attitudes/actions align with hooks' argument that to attend well to others and ourselves—that is, to be fully present and in the presence of others—we need to avoid "the dualistic separation of public and private" (16). Avoiding this split means, in part, that we bring our full selves into the work and also see the people with whom we work as fully human. We see writers as more than a single text, writing conference, or individual, as we understand how our identities are shaped by larger group memberships that are historically, materially, and

socially constructed. Full embodiment forces us to resist universalized understandings of who the student is (imagining some "typical" first-year student, "non-traditional" student, etc.) and the idealized and (mis)represented history of the person rather than to the person herself. To move beyond universalized understandings, we need to see writers as complex: both uniquely human and humanly constructed, both on their own terms and on the terms of larger legacies and local conditions. To be present and in partnership, we need also to see others as we see ourselves (and ourselves as we see others): both capable of learning and teaching, both already positioned with rich linguistic resources and in ongoing development of new resources. These both/and stances bring attention as much or more to the tutor's role in learning and engaging in sessions. Or, as hooks says when speaking to classroom teachers: "When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are asked to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek simply to empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process" (21). This third dimension of an anti-racism pedagogy draws our attention to holistic learning, as there is much to learn from a principled position and on the long haul for racial justice.<sup>5</sup>

### **Bringing It All Together: Toward A Multi-Dimensional Pedagogy for Racial Justice**

When we think about a pedagogy for racial justice, we think about a multi-dimensional approach for tutoring writing. This multi-dimensional approach involves teachers/tutors, students/writers, disciplines/institutions, as well as campus leaders/administrators. All are partners in addressing the many manifestations of oppression that impact our lives in educational settings. Together, we engage anti-racism on many levels, including what we know (knowledge), how we know (our lived experience and methods), how we position ourselves in relation to others (stances), and how we think and act in the world everyday (actions). Because racism is both structural and everyday, anti-racism too must be structural and everyday. As such, anti-racism pedagogy touches on all aspects of writing center work, necessitating reflection on our deepest values and informal interactions. This work requires both individual and institutional investment in equity and justice, an investment that shapes the writing center at its core and requires frequent re-investment. We value

this re-investment and strive, with humility, to write about making commitments actionable, even as our attempts recycle the same assumptions that leave us feeling stuck in the workings of ideology and whiteness. And yet we trust that with a long-term commitment to racial justice, we can more easily try out, “test,” refine, and re-articulate our own multi-dimensional approaches like the one discussed here. With a long-term commitment to racial justice, we can more easily identify other important and unforeseen dimensions of anti-racism pedagogy, thereby answering our disciplinary mandate. And, with a long-term commitment to racial justice, we can see the work of anti-racism in *all our interactions*, not only ones explicitly about race/ism as highlighted in the scenarios we share here.

As we write concluding sentences to this piece, we remember Malea Powell’s 2012 Chair’s Address at the Annual Convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC). In this address, Powell and her invited co-authors recounted histories of exclusions and marginalizations in the discipline. Collectively, however, their stories exceeded a series of recounted histories. Rather, Powell and her co-authors intervened, changing the scene of exclusions and marginalizations, using their lived experiences and the narratives held within them to direct our attention toward the need for intervention. They re-wrote history every time one of the co-authors said powerfully, provocatively, and persistently: “This is my story. Do with it what you will.” Their accounts thus became testimonies. In testifying, they were mobilizing a charge to the discipline at large. “Do with it what you will” is a call for action, for transformation that moves us *together* and *forward* toward racial justice with its attendant linguistic, cultural, and epistemic rights. Likewise, as we recount our perspectives and ongoing efforts toward a racially just pedagogy (one founded in *praxis*), we renew our commitment to social justice, on the one hand, while we seek *with you* to rewrite our disciplinary space, on the other. We echo the co-authors’ voices, giving homage to their call and charge for a similar actionable commitment: “This is our story. Do with it what you will.”

#### Notes

1. For an historical account of 1950’s language rights’ debates that paved the road to the “Students Right to Their Own Language” Resolution, please read

Geneva Smitherman’s “CCCC Role in the Struggle for Language Rights.” The number of position statements addressing anti-racism or social justice increases once we add those passed by CCCC (the Conference on College Composition and Communication), MLA (Modern Language Association), CEE (Conference on English Education), and NCA (National Communication Association). The 30 reported here are ones listed under the category Diversity, one of numerous position statements categories. For a full list of all position statements, please see the NCTE’s website: <http://www.ncte.org/positions/diversity>. You might also find other statements listed under different categories pertinent to discussion of racial and social justice (e.g. Resolution on Social Justice in Literacy Education available at <http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/socialjustice>).

2. Part of our ongoing work toward developing a pedagogy for racial justice has involved compiling and reconstructing scenarios with colleagues across the United States. As we write in a separate project, we believe that scenarios like the ones shared here are valuable to document instances of oppression; to invite a range of reflection; and, perhaps most importantly, to develop intervention skills.

3. The *we* here signifies multiple positions, such as student, tutor, and director. Facilitators and participants both play important roles in helping each other conduct deep analysis; therefore, the way examples are discussed is as important as the examples themselves. Activities, protocols, and our own individual behavior can impact these conversations significantly, making a reflective and attentive pedagogy all the more important.

4. For a discussion of race and space, see especially work by George Lipsitz who shows how “the national spatial imaginary is racially marked, and segregation serves as crucible for creating the emphasis on exclusion” (10). Thanks to Moira Ozias for introducing us to this work. And see Kevin Fox Gotham’s book for a local discussion about race and urban development in Kansas City, Missouri.

5. *The Long Haul* by Myles Horton and the Highlander Research and Education Center (formerly the Highlander Folk School) not only shows the expansive time component of anti-racism and social justice work, but also provides insight into holistic and collaborative ways of working and living. Also see Condon’s *I Hope to Join the Band*, Denny’s *Facing the Center*, and Geller et al.’s *The Everyday Writing Center* for representations of embodied and engaged pedagogy in

action within tutoring sessions, professional development, and program development. In addition to Horton's *The Long Haul*, these three recent texts demonstrate how anti-racism work stretches across long periods of time within multiple settings.

## Works Cited

- Canagarajah, Suresh. "An Updated SRTOL?" <http://cccc-blog.blogspot.com/search?q=canagarajah>. Conference on College Composition and Communication, 4 Nov. 2010. Web. 1 May 2011.
- Condon, Frankie. "Beyond the Known: Writing Centers and the Work of Anti-racism." *The Writing Center Journal* 27.2 (2007): 19-38. Print.
- Condon, Frankie. *I Hope I Join the Band: Narrative, Affiliation, and Antiracist Rhetoric*. Utah: Utah University Press, 2012. Print.
- Conference on College Composition and Communication. "Students' Right to Their Own Language." *College Composition and Communication* 25.3 (1974): 1-32. Print.
- Cross-Language Relations in Composition. Spec. issue of *College English* 68.6 (2006). Print.
- Dees, Sarah, Beth Godbee, and Moira Ozias. "Navigating Conversational Turns: Grounding Difficult Discussions on Racism." *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal* 5.1 (Fall 2007). Web.
- Denny, Harry. *Facing the Center: Toward an Identity Politics of One-to-One Mentoring*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2010. Print.
- Diab, Rasha, Thomas Ferrel, Beth Godbee, and Neil Simpkins. "Making Commitments to Racial Justice Actionable." Forthcoming in *Across the Disciplines*. Special Issue on "Anti-Racist Activism: Teaching Rhetoric and Writing." Eds. Frankie Condon and Vershawn Ashanti Young. Anticipated publication date: Fall 2012.
- Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 1970. New York: Continuum, 2006. Print.
- Geller, Anne Ellen, Michele Eodice, Frankie Condon, Meg Carroll, and Elizabeth H. Boquet. "Everyday Racism: Anti-Racism Work and Writing Center Practice." *The Everyday Writing Center: A Community of Practice*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2007. 87-109. Print.
- Geller, Anne Ellen. "Tick-Tock, Next: Finding Epochal Time in the Writing Center." *The Writing Center Journal* 25.1 (2005): 5-24. Print.
- Gotham, Kevin Fox. *Race, Real Estate, and Uneven Development: The Kansas City Experience*. Albany, NY: SUNY P, 2002. Print.
- Greenfield, Laura, and Karen Rowan, eds. *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2011.
- Grimm, Nancy. "Rethorizing Writing Center Work to Transform a System of Advantage Based on Race." *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change*. Eds. Laura Greenfield and Karen Rowan. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2011. 75-100. Print.
- hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Horner, Bruce, Min-Zhan Lu, and Paul Matsuda, eds. *Cross-Language Relations in Composition*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 2010. Print.
- Horton, Myles, with Judith Kohl and Herbert Kohl. *The Long Haul: An Autobiography*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1997. Print.
- Liptsitz, George. "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race: Theorizing the Hidden Architecture of Landscape." *Landscape Journal* 26.1 (2007): 10-23. Print.
- Powell, Malea. "Stories Take Place." Conference on College Composition and Communication. St. Louis, MO. 22 March 2012. Chair's Address.
- Smitherman, Geneva. "CCCC's Role in the Struggle for Language Rights." *College Composition and Communication* 50.3 (1999): 349-376. Print.
- - -. "'Students' Right to Their Own Language': A Retrospective." *The English Journal* 84.1 (1995): 21-27. Print.
- Villanueva, Victor. "Blind: Talking About the New Racism." *The Writing Center Journal* 26.1 (2006): 3-19. Print.
- Young, Vershawn Ashanti. "Should Writers Use Their Own English?" *Writing Centers and the New Racism: A Call for Sustainable Dialogue and Change*. Eds. Laura Greenfield and Karen Rowan. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2011. 61-72. Print.